

Message Text

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PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON SEVERAL AGRICULTURAL ISSUES
1. SUMMARY: AGATT RECENTLY HAD DISCUSSION ON WIDE RANGE
OF ISSUES WITH MARCEL STUYCK, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ECONOMIC
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, BELGIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.
AMONG TOPICS DISCUSSED AND NOT REPORTED SEPARATELY WERE
BELGIAN VIEWS ON NEW IWA; EC 1978/79 AGRICULTURAL PRICE
NEGOTIATIONS; FUTURE EC AGRICULTURAL POLICIES; AND EC
EXPANSION. END SUMMARY.

2. IWA
CONCERNING A NEW INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT, STUYCK
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SAID BELGIUM IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT WIDE PRICE
FLUCTUATIONS AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM MINIMIZED OR
SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED. HE ALSO SAID A NEW AGREEMENT
SHOULD AVOID BEING TOO RIGID IN THE BEGINNING.

3. EC 1978/79 AGRICULTURAL PRICE NEGOTIATIONS
STUYCK BELIEVES THE CURRENT ROUND OF PRICE NEGOTIATIONS

WILL PROBABLY BE SETTLED IN EARLY APRIL, AND THAT THE AVERAGE PRICE INCREASE WILL FALL BETWEEN THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL AND THE COPA PROPOSAL. THE LATTER PROPOSAL WAS IN FACT THE SAME AS THE BELGIAN POSITION. UNLESS SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT IN THIS MATTER IS REACHED, STUYCK FEELS INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COUNTRIES WILL BE TEMPTED TO UNDERTAKE NATIONAL MEASURES TO HELP THEIR FARMERS. FOR EXAMPLE, BELGIUM COULD REQUEST SUSPENSION OF THE DAIRY CO-RESPONSIBILITY TAX, WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF INCREASING MILK PRICES FOR PRODUCERS. HOWEVER, STUYCK DOES NOT FAVOR A PROLIFERATION OF SUCH EXCEPTIONS WHICH WOULD TEND TO MAKE THE CAP INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO MANAGE.

4. FUTURE EC AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

STUYCK BELIEVES EC AGRICULTURE SHOULD BE RATIONALIZED BY TYPE OF PRODUCTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE LESS DEVELOPED AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY. BY RATIONALIZATION, HE ENVISIONS A CONCEPT BASED ON PRODUCTION UNITS, WITH THE COMMUNITY POSSIBLY MAKING DIRECT INCOME PAYMENTS TO FARMERS BASED ON THE TYPE OF COMMODITY PRODUCED. SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD TEND TO RESEMBLE THE BRITISH APPROACH USED BEFORE JOINING THE EC.

5. EC EXPANSION

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STUYCK SAID BELGIUM AND OTHER NORTHERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE NOT TOO CONCERNED ABOUT ADDITIONAL COMPETITION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AS A RESULT OF THE ENTRY OF SPAIN, GREECE AND PORTUGAL, WHEREAS THE OPPOSITE FEELING EXISTS IN ITALY AND FRANCE. NEVERTHELESS, STUYCK BELIEVES BELGIAN PRODUCER GROUPS, SUCH AS THE BOERENBOND, WILL, FOR THEIR OWN REASONS, PUBLICALLY EXPRESS SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE AGRICULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF EC EXPANSION. CHAMBERS

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